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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 006333

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/IPA AND EUR/AGS

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [SZ](#) [GOI](#) [EXTERNAL](#) [ISRAELI](#) [SOCIETY](#) [HUMANITARIAN](#) [AID](#)

SUBJECT: EMBLEM: GOI REJECTS MDA STATEMENT BUT WILL NOT  
CLARIFY TO CONFERENCE INVITEES

REF: A. GREENE-WALLES E-MAIL 10/15/2005

[B](#). GENEVA 02395

Classified By: Richard H. Jones for reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: Israeli MFA Director for International Organizations and Human Rights Daniel Meron told poloff November 1 that the Government of Israel (GOI) has made clear to the Swiss its rejection of the widely disseminated oral statement by MDA Chairman Noam Yifrach, but has not specifically asked the Swiss to advise conference invitees of the GOI rejection. Yifrach's September 27 oral statement in Geneva stipulated that once the MDA joins the Red Cross Movement its "geographical scope" will be "confined to the State of Israel within its internationally recognized borders." (ref A) Meron passed to poloff the October 6 letter from MFA Deputy Director General for International Organizations Affairs Aharon Leshno Yaar to Swiss Ambassador at Large for the Emblems of the Geneva Conventions Didier Pfirter, which states that Yifrach's oral statement is "not binding on or reflective of the position of the State of Israel." Describing Yifrach's oral statement as "political dynamite" in Israel, Meron told poloff that the GOI has "no intention whatsoever to stop settlers receiving services from the MDA." Meron, however, said he does not believe that Yifrach's oral statement will disrupt plans for the December 5 conference on the Third Protocol, and insisted that "Yifrach will not repeat such statements in the future." Post notes that the GOI decision to leave it up to the Swiss to decide whether or not to communicate GOI opposition to Yifrach's oral statement, which the Swiss disseminated to conference invitees, may itself be "political dynamite" if it leads participants to attend the December 5 conference on the basis of false expectations about GOI willingness to accept a delimitation of MDA activities in the occupied territories. END SUMMARY.

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IMPORTANT MEETINGS ALREADY CONVENED  
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[1](#)2. (C) Meron reported that since the October 31 departure from Israel of Swiss FM Calmy-Rey, officials have begun "moving very quickly" to prepare for the conference. He said that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Representative in Israel has already convened meetings between the MDA and the PRCS. In addition, Meron reported, Israeli Ministry of Defence Advisor BG (res) Baruch Spiegel met with the ICRC on November 1 to discuss how the GOI can lift restrictions on movement for PRCS ambulances in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

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YIFRACH'S ORAL STATEMENT IS "POLITICAL DYNAMITE"  
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[1](#)3. (C) Meron explained that he does not believe Yifrach's September 27 oral statement in Geneva will disrupt plans for the December 5 conference. Swiss FM Calmy-Rey respected Yaar and Meron's request that she not raise the issue of Yifrach's oral statement during her meetings with Prime Minister Sharon and Foreign Minister Shalom.

[1](#)4. (C) Meron also reiterated in strong terms the GOI position vis--vis the oral statement Yifrach delivered in Geneva. While the GOI supports Yifrach's written statement of September 27 on behalf of MDA, Meron said, he stressed that "we have nothing to do with his oral statement," which Yifrach pronounced on the same date. (ref B) Describing Yifrach's oral statement as "political dynamite" in Israel, Meron insisted that the GOI has "no intention whatsoever to stop settlers receiving services from the MDA." For the Jewish people in Israel and abroad, he explained, MDA is a "powerful symbol of unity." Meron also confidently predicted that "Yifrach will not repeat such statements in the future."

[1](#)5. (C) Meron cited the Oslo Agreements in explaining that the issue of health services in the occupied territories is to be resolved during final status negotiations. Only the Palestinians have recently urged MDA to consider delimiting its area of operations, Meron said; no one else, he stressed, including the Europeans, has pressed the GOI on this issue. Meron also reported, however, his personal belief that the

Swiss "dictated to Yifrach" the language he employed in his oral statement of September 27, which Ambassador Pfirter then transcribed and broadly circulated in a letter to other delegations on September 30. (ref B) The Swiss may have been motivated, Meron explained, by their fear that the states in the Organization of the Islamic Conference will seek to undermine any conference on the Third Additional Protocol.

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OFFICIAL LETTER FROM YAAR TO PFIRTER  
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16. (C) Meron passed to poloff the October 6 letter from Yaar to Swiss Ambassador Didier Pfirter, the full text of which follows:

"It has been brought to my attention that at a meeting in Geneva on September 27, 2005, Dr. Noam Yifrach, in his capacity as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Magen David Adom Society, signed a declaration on issues relating to the use of the emblem. On the same occasion he made some oral remarks.

"Dr. Yifrach has advised me that these oral remarks were made informally in a personal capacity, and so they do not necessarily reflect the position of the Magen David Adom Society in Israel. It goes without saying that they are not binding on or reflective of the position of the State of Israel."

17. (C) Meron asked that the USG not share this text with outside parties. Meron also said that the GOI has not asked FM Calmy-Rey to clarify either publicly, or in private communication with other participants in the planned December conference, the GOI position with regard to Yifrach's oral statement. Nor, Meron said, does the GOI intend before the conference to comment, publicly or through channels, on Yifrach's oral statement.

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JONES